

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

School Improvement Councils (SICs) serve the school principal and faculty in an advisory role, bringing together parents, educators, students, and community stakeholders to collaborate on the improvement of their local school. SICs are mandated by law to exist in every public school in South Carolina. Over 15,000 people, consisting of elected parents, teachers and students, appointed community members and other volunteers, and school administrators serve on 1,164 SICs in the Palmetto State.*

Local school boards have been required to establish School Improvement Councils since 1977. Three specific laws enacted by the SC General Assembly define the role and responsibilities of councils: the EIA in 1984, Act 135 in 1993, and the EAA in 1998.

HOW YOU CAN HELP



Parents of students in the school, teachers and students in grades 9 - 12 are elected to the SIC by their peers. Middle school students may also participate on an SIC if the school wishes, but this is not required. Community members are appointed by the principal, who takes care to ensure that these people represent the greater school community including non-parent taxpayers. The principal always serves as an ex-officio council member. Ex-officio positions may also include PTA/O president, volunteer coordinator, business partner, Booster Club president, Teacher of the Year, or past SIC chair, as set forth in the local SIC's bylaws. Non-SIC members may also serve on SIC committees.

* As of 0/26/09. Data from SC-SIC Member Network, an online database designed for direct local SIC membership input and reporting. SIC membership data for all state K-12 public schools is due to be reported by the schools or districts by November 15th annually in accordance with state law. This data may be updated throughout the school year and is fully accessible online to the general public at <http://sic.sc.gov>.

WHY YOU SHOULD KNOW IT

Volunteering two hours per month for eight months per year of meeting and planning time results in a total of **241,472*** SIC volunteer hours annually for South Carolina's public schools. This number does not reflect the additional volunteer time devoted to SIC programs and other initiatives.

The value of the total number of SIC volunteer hours - calculated from the hourly 2006 South Carolina volunteer rate of \$15.52 per hour (www.independentsector.org/programs/research/volunteer_time.html) - equals a total value of **\$3.75 million dollars per year.**

When parents are involved in their children's education, the quality of the life of a school improves and children do better in school. Parents have knowledge and perception based on their own children's experiences and have access to the insight of other parents which can provide a positive influence on the development of their child's school. Community members who feel ownership in a school are often the best advocates for children and the school. Citizens who do not have children in the school can make unique contributions to the SIC based on their varied experiences and knowledge. Senior citizens, business people, faith community members, social service agency staff, and others have special knowledge, experience and resources to share.

School Improvement Councils:

- Assist in the development of the school's 5-year improvement plan (a.k.a., renewal or strategic plan).
- Assist the school in monitoring and evaluating the plan's implementation and help to update the plan each year.
- Write the annual Report to the Parents - released by April 30 of each year to the school community.
- Advise on the spending of incentive funds awarded to the school (Palmetto Gold and Silver Awards).
- Assist the principal in writing the narrative for the annual School Report Card issued by the SC Department of Education.
- Advise on the revisions of the school improvement plan if the school is rated as "At Risk" on their School Report Card.

SICs do not have any of the powers, responsibilities and/or duties reserved by the local school board.